



# Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach An Informed Group Conscience *KBDM Quick Reference Tool*



Before you begin discussing the issue, the group:

- Announces topic at least 2 weeks in advance
- Decides time issues: set time for meeting and for each discussion, and whether or not to use a timer.
- Considers adopting guidelines, such as: Start and stop on time. Stick to the agenda. No side conversations. No cross talk. Be polite and courteous. Listen: if someone says what you were going to say, don't repeat it. Who has a voice and a vote? What percentage reflects unanimity and a majority?
- Decides who will: 1) facilitate the KBDM process (call on people, keep track of where you are in the process), 2) take notes, and 3) who will summarize (this could be the same person or several people).
- Your individual part? Participate in the dialogue. Practice our principles. Assume good will. The issue may require more than one group conscience: practice patience and humility. "Let it begin with me." (See our *Service Manual 2014-2017*, pp. 52-55, for guidance regarding *Group Business*.)

## How It Works (What do we actually *do*?)

– Discussion and information gathering before deciding –

The issue is first "framed" or introduced by someone familiar with the topic. Then we gather information, ask questions, and have a conversation *before* crafting a solution.

1. **Exchange Information**—everyone has equal access to the same:
  - a. Printed material (e.g. *Service Manual*, past motions, archives from meeting, etc.), and
  - b. **Explore the issue using the 5 KBDM questions** (below) as a guide (or this can be assigned to a Thought Force or a committee).
2. **Summarize** what you learned before moving onto the discussion.
3. **Discuss**
  - a. Discuss and offer opinions *based on information already exchanged* and on experience, strength, and hope.
  - b. Additional questions may be asked at this time.
4. **Summarize** the discussion. Then, *before* making a decision or offering a motion:
  - Has everyone asked all the questions needed for clarity?
  - Have all opinions, including the minority opinions, been heard?
  - Does everyone feel they thoroughly understand the topic?
  - Does everyone feel that an informed group conscience has taken place?
5. **Make a Decision** (3 possibilities)
  - a. Further research or deliberation may be needed about the issue.
  - b. Suggestion/Motion may be made (e.g. informal show of hands, or motion/second, if large group).
  - c. Status Quo (leave as is).

## Five KBDM Questions

The answers to the questions below can provide a basis for discussion. They provide common information so everyone can be on the same page. Gather information to these questions. Everyone can add to them.

- 1. What do we know about our members' (and prospective members') needs, wants and preferences that relate to this issue?**  
*(How important is it? Is it what our current members want? How will it affect newcomers? What purpose would this serve? Is it necessary? Is it helpful?)*
- 2. What do we know about the resources and our vision for Al-Anon and our meetings that are relevant to this issue?**  
*(What are our resources? Can we afford it? Do we have enough volunteers to make it happen? Do we have any background information in our archives that can help us answer this question?)*
- 3. What do we know about our “culture” and “environment” that is relevant to this discussion? In other words--Will our decision be consistent with our principles, policies, and legacies: the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts? What are the implications of our choices? What are the pros and cons?**  
*(How would this affect our meeting? How would this affect our fellowship? Newcomers? Al-Anon (and A.A.) as a whole? Does our Service Manual provide any guidance about this issue? Pros/Cons: The advantages of this change might be? The disadvantages might be?)*
- 4. What are the ethical implications of our choices? Would we be practicing our “principles in all our affairs”?**  
*(Is our decision legal? Will our decision help us fulfill our primary purpose? If we decide to take an action, will it be the “right” thing to do?)*
- 5. What do we wish we knew, but don't?**  
*(Might our decision have unintended consequences? We might need to do some additional work or research to help us make a sound decision. )*

After our best efforts to answer these questions, and through listening with open minds and hearts, we trust in each other and our Higher Power, and make a decision. Once a decision is made, the entire group supports the decision.